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ABSTRACT

Identifying types of available courseware, examining potentially useful items, and generating ideas about directions composition instructors at Drexel University might take in adapting quality software for the Macintosh and designing courseware for their specific educational needs are the identified goals in Part I of this Report entitled "A Project to Investigate Possibilities for Microcomputer Use in a Developmental Writing Course." This part covers work in the fall quarter of 1983, which included training in microcomputer use, review of software used in basic writing courses at other universities, consultation with the Drexel Instructional Support Group, and research at the Drexel Software Review Center and the Drexel Library. Part II of this report focuses on work during the winter quarter of 1984, records six observations about microcomputer use in basic writing, and suggests nine uses for computers in R900, a developmental writing course. Attachments include an introduction and overview regarding the staffing and teaching of R900, a sample syllabus for R900, and a course description. (DF)

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MICROCOMPUTER USE IN A DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING COURSE

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Report on a Project to Investigate Possibilities for Microcomputer Use in a Developmental Writing Course, Part I

This project, which was carried out during Fall 1983 involved locating and reviewing information on available software for use in R 900, the developmental writing course at Drexel University. (See Attachment A: Developmental Writing at Drexel University). My goal was to identify types of available courseware, examine potentially useful items, and generate ideas about directions composition instructors at Drexel University might take in adapting quality software for the Macintosh and designing courseware for our specific needs at Drexel.

My interest in this project was sparked by my work with computers in Drexel's faculty development programs and in the Technical Writing sections which I taught. Learning word processing on the LISA and the APPLE IIe, where I completed a bibliography project, has made me enthusiastic about the benefits of using microcomputers for freshman writers. Participating in a faculty seminar on database search techniques increased my appreciation for the range of writing-related activities possible on a microcomputer. After having used the AFCAD word processing lab in Drexel's Computer Center for my Technical Writing sections for several terms, I am very satisfied with this approach to technical writing instruction. Besides the word processing software itself. Dr. Valarie Arms' CREATE and RECREATE invention and revision programs, which are used in this course, have proved useful aids in helping students become effective writers. These experiences with computers and writing have encouraged me, as Director of the Developmental Writing Program at Drexel, that computer-assisted composition has much to offer freshman writers in R 900.

Composition theorists tell us that writing is a process, including pre-writing, writing, and revision. The integrated word processing software of the Macintosh can be used extensively in the writing and revision stages. I have investigated additional supporting software for

pre-writing and revision, as well as for grammar review. Criteria for evaluating software or descriptions of software include:

1. The courseware content must be appropriate for college level writers.

2. The software should take advantage of the unique capabilities of the computer so that it is more than a textbook on the machine.

3. The software must engage students by demanding them to interact with the program. This is particularly important for composition students at the R 900 level, where confidence and interest in writing are usually low.

4. The software should be user-friendly and forgiving of non-substantive errors, like typing errors. It is counterproductive to frustrate students, particularly R 900 students, with an inflexible program.

5. The software should allow for variation in ability levels among R 900 students, with branching routines, for example.

My investigation included two database searches: Resources in Computer Education (RICE), and Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). In addition, I manually searched The Software Catalog, Spring 1983, from International Software Database. These searches led me to articles on current research and to promising software titles. On the whole, the results of the searches were disappointing. There seems to be very little relevant, quality material available, and the overwhelming majority of items are for elementary or secondary level students. The field appears to be wide open for investigation of microcomputer applications in college level composition instruction.

The courseware I examined has included some promising items, but I have found that many others are not appropriate for our use at Drexel. One interesting title already in the Software Review Center is THINKTANK,

intended as an aid in information-management but potentially useful in R 900 instruction. Its capability of helping a writer systematically organize information into outlines makes it promising for use in conjunction with an invention program like Dr. Arms' CREATE. After the invention program helps students generate and sharpen the focus of ideas, THINKTANK helps with organization of ideas into major assertions and supporting evidence.

I examined VOCAB 1 and 2 (from TYCOM) in the Drexel Software Review Center and found that it does not meet our needs. The format of parts 1 and 2 is the same, but the vocabulary is more difficult in part 2. In general, the vocabulary level is satisfactory for college freshmen, although some words in part 2 may be difficult for R 900. The general concept of learning vocabulary through synonyms in a guessing game is acceptable and could be effective in R 900. The problems lie in the design of the program.

The first section of each part presents two columns of synonyms, with 18 words per column in each frame. This is far too many words to grasp in each frame. No definitions are given, and no words are used in phrases or sentences to show shades of meaning or to aid retention. There is no way to exit this section of the program; the student must see every frame of 36 words. The second section is a word game drawing on vocabulary in the first section. "I am thinking of a 5 letter word meaning severe," quizzes the program. The student has three tries to guess "acute," with some hints. The final score counts only whether the student finally did or did not guess correctly. John Harvey of the Instructional Support Group has suggested that a help key could give definitions after the student has missed a word and that the screens of parts 1 and 2 should be coordinated for better instructional value.

At the Modern Language Association (MLA) Convention in New York in December, I gathered information on HOMER: A Computerized Revision Program for Apple II and Apple IIe, by Michael E. Cohen and Richard A. Lanham of UCLA, available from Charles Scribner's Sons. Designed specifically for the college level student, it uses the eight-step revision process of Lanham's Revising Prose and Revising Business Prose texts to guide students in revising their compositions by highlighting wordy, vague,

and ineffective style and commenting on the Student's sentence structure. The program has been used successfully at UCLA for over two years.

At MLA I also saw a demonstration of WRITING IS THINKING and talked with its author, Mary Kappel of Richland Community College, Dallas, Texas. She is planning to adapt this courseware, written for a 64K IBM, to an Apple IIe by the Summer of 1984. The program features four sections that deal with the writing process. Pre-writing sections cover analysis of the problem and development of a structure, and a revision section reviews rules for making papers more effective. Kappel explains that the program works best with regular composition students, but that it has been used in basic and honors writing courses. A student manual provides further exercises and information. This courseware emphasizes the development of logical thought and effective use of facts in expository and narrative writing. The major drawbacks that I see are that there is little student interaction in much of the program, there is too much prose to read, making it appear like a computerized workbook, and that it intentionally omits word processing capability, so that revisions necessitate retyping the complete text.

I have visited Temple University's Media Learning Center, where they use two grammar and syntax programs from CONDUIT with their basic writing students. One is DIALOGUE, by Susan Wittig of Project C-BE, University of Texas. It consists of computer-assisted tutorials designed to supplement classroom work in sentence syntax and to review basic syntactical problems. The second, GRAMMAR, is more a basic branching drill and practice program of grammar and mechanics rules. These would be possibilities for R 900 if we decide to include some basic review programs in a writing lab courseware library set-up.

I have discussed with Dr. Arms the WANDAH (Writing-aid And Author's Helper) software package for the IBM Personal Computer and have read literature about it, and I see several advantages of this program for R 900.

It was developed by the Word Processor Writing Project of UCLA; Ruth Von Blum of the Department of Psychology is Project Director and Michael Cohen, programmer for HOMER, is Principal Programmer. Although it is not

now available to the public, IBM may market it. WANDAH sounds particularly appropriate for R 900 as well as a regular freshman composition course because its three main divisions focus on the pre-writing, writing, and revision stages of the writing process, offering an unusually comprehensive computer-assisted composition package. The pre-writing section incorporates freewriting and "invisible writing" to overcome writer's block. Students are encouraged to write without pause---the screen will even signal them if there is a pause of input. Invisible writing takes particular advantage of the computer medium by not allowing student writers to see what they've written during the freewriting stage, in order to prevent their laboring over revisions prematurely. It thus encourages the free flow of ideas. Nutshelling is a pre-writing strategy that encourages students to state concisely their paper's purpose, audience, and argument. The writing section of WANDAH incorporates user-friendly word processing software and the revision section includes reviews for organization, style and mechnics. The stylistic review is very similar to that of HOMER. This section allows for global revision. Overall, WANDAH is very forgiving and it benefits the student by providing a printout of the entire writing session with the computer.

At the final meeting with my R 900 staff for the fall quarter I explained my project, communicated some of these findings, and invited instructors' ideas and response. I have also distributed to the staff copies of William Wresch's article, "Computers in English Class: Finally beyond Grammar and Spelling Drills." College English 44, No. 5 (Sept. 1982), 482-490. This article gives the reader an overview of types of courseware available in composition.

Report on a Project to Investigate Possibilities for Microcomputer Use in a Developmental Writing Course, Part II

This is the second report on a project to investigate possibilities for microcomputer use in R900, a developmental writing course at Drexel University. It covers work done during the Winter quarter 1984, as well as continuing work. My goal in this project was to identify types of available courseware, examine potentially useful items, and generate ideas about directions composition instructors might take in adapting quality software for the Macintosh, and designing courseware for our specific needs at Drexel.

During the Fall quarter 1983, my investigation included several related activities: personal training in microcomputer use, review of software used in basic writing courses at other universities, consultation with the Drexel Instructional Support Group, a group which includes programmers and designers of Macintosh software, and research at the Drexel Software Review Center and the Drexel Library. My work during the Winter quarter focused on putting to practical use the information gleaned during the fall. I considered specific applications of microcomputer use in the developmental writing course at Drexel and disseminated information on my research to interested faculty both within and outside the Department of Humanities and Communications at Drexel.

Continued Review of Courseware for Basic Writing

In this second phase of the project I continued my review of courseware for basic writing; much of the courseware available would also be appropriate for use in the Writing Lab and in R101, the first course in the Freshman Humanities Sequence at Drexel.

I spoke by telephone with Professor James P. Pusack, of the German Department at the University of Iowa. He is the Conduit Series Editor for Humanities/Languages. He suggested that developing new courseware for the Macintosh would be a more promising direction to take than adapting Conduit's Apple IIe courseware to the Macintosh. He outlined the

courseware now available from Conduit and the projects they are currently considering for the Apple IIe.

Conduit's English: Basic Mechanics Series, which I had already ordered in demonstration disk form for the Drexel Software Review Center (see Fall report), gives "extensive coverage of grammar and a well established but traditional introduction to English grammar." A new Conduit product now coming out is a grammatical review. One recent submission courseware to aid students in the revision process; it does text analysis to some extent, but not as extensively as WRITER'S WORKBENCH. Professor Pusack noted that he is available for informal review of proposals if faculty would like to submit their ideas to him.

I reviewed WORDY: Common Forms of Wordiness, by Priscilla Sears of Dartmouth College (Compress 1982), in the Software Review Center at Drexel. I found it inappropriate for our use. Attractive graphics are its strong point. The program should allow for more student interaction, provide clearer directions, and deal more flexibly with errors.

I also reviewed a demonstration disk of THE WRITING LAB in the Software Review Center. Again, graphics are attractive, but the courseware content does not appear to be of high quality. Little student interaction appears to be required, but this may be the result of poor selection of materials for the demo disk. Four modules cover word group sets, sentence combining, sentence errors, and mechanical errors. Though attractively formatted, many of the lessons appear to offer no advantages over a textbook.

The courseware that I have been most interested to review is HOMER: A Computerized Revision Program for Apple II and Apple IIe, by Richard A. Lanham and Michael E. Cohen of UCLA. Scribner's Sales Representative Mary Jane Peluso came to Drexel in April and demonstrated HOMER to interested Humanities and Communications faculty . She also showed a videotape of Lanham's revision method that he uses in both HOMER and his texts, *Revising Prose* and *Revising Business Prose.* Faculty present at the demonstration thought that HOMER is not entirely appropriate for use at Drexel at this time. The program seems to assume that the instructor is using Lanham's text in the course; indeed, most

universities that have purchased HOMER have used the texts first. Lanham has an eight step revision method, and the student would have to be instructed in his method before using the software. There is a "help" section that gives definitions, but it presents a large amount of unbroken text on the screen.

The actual analysis of the text that the student types into the computer is interesting but limited. The program can identify excessive use of prepositions, "to be" verbs, "shun" words, and vague words. It gives the writer information about his/her text in two ways: by a "verbal surface map" that pulls the offending words out of the text and places them at the left of the screen, and by a coded identifying letter placed over those words in the text. Graphs of sentence length and statistics on the various word usage problems are provided. It is then up to the writer to use this information in revision. SARTOR is a program included on the HOMER diskette that would allow instructors at Drexel to modify the basic program according to their own specifications.

The concept of a revision program is a very appropriate one for freshman writing courses; indeed, it would be useful for Technical Writing, Business Writing, and even instructors' own work. However, HOMER offers a limited selection of points for revision. WRITER'S WORKBENCH would be much more thorough, but it is quite sophisticated for developmental writing students and it requires a UNIX sytem. In the microcomputer realm Ruth Von Blum's WANDAH (see Fall report), which is not yet on the market, would probably be more useful than HOMER.

Observations about Microcomputer Use in Basic Writing

1. There are three basic types of courseware used for composition instruction. William Wresch makes a useful distinction among these in "Computers in English Class: Finally Beyond Grammar and Spelling Drills," *College English*, 44, No. 5 (Sept. 1982), 482-490:

Drill and Practice: Used to supplement class instruction in grammar, vocabulary, spelling. Its advantage is that it gives

immediate feedback, but its disadvantage is that it does not adapt to students' varied skill levels.

Tutorial CAI: Used to supplement class instruction in grammar, vocabulary, spelling. Uses branching to individualize lessons.

Dialogue Systems: May be used to supplement class instruction in grammar, vocabulary, spelling. May also be used for pre-writing and revision "conferences" with students. Students have much more control over their learning process than with Drill and Practice and Tutorial courseware. Students also feel much more free to experiment with ideas and revise than they do when responding to questions on a printed sheet of paper.

2. A second useful classification of courseware is according to the stages of the writing process it addresses:

Pre-writing: The computer is perhaps most valuable in a writing course at this stage of the writing process. Students using invention programs like Hugh Burns' programs or Valarie Arms' CREATE are able to have a pre-writing "conference" with the computer for each paper. This is, of course, an invaluable aid to instructors who cannot possibly hold a conference before each student writes every paper. Steven Marcus of the South Coast Writing Program at the University of California, Santa Barbara, makes imaginative use of the computer's own capabilities without specially designed software, by having his students do freewriting before writing essays. By turning down the monitor, the student can write "invisibly" if a tendency toward perfectionism gets in the way of the free flow of ideas during a pre-writing session. The material is always there for the student to edit after the brainstorming session is over. [See Marcus, "Real-Time Gadgets with Feedback: Special Effects in Computer-Assisted Writing," *The Writing Instructor* (Summer 1983).] Some interesting work on peer consulting is being done using computer networks. Marcus has used this approach, as has Helen Schwartz in her "SEEN" invention program for literature classes.

Hugh Burns raises an interesting point about the use of computers in pre-writing in his article in the Spring 1983 issue of *Pipeline*. He found that students who used the computer produced more ideas than students who brainstormed on paper, but students using the computer could organize their results no better. Some students even found that the large number of ideas made organization more difficult. Perhaps this problem could be addressed through the combined use of invention programs and a program stressing organization, like the THINKTANK information management program in the Software Review Center.

Writing: Students who are enthusiastic about using word processing software for their essays tend to write more often and to write longer compositions. They become more sensitive to the visual impact of their text on a page, and they are more motivated to experiment with organization since the computer medium is so flexible. Since revision is so easy, the writer's task is much less painful and the basic writing student in particular does not need to fear the "risk" of committing words to paper. Marcus notes that even the act of scrolling can help to break writer's block.

Holt, Rinehart and Winston are reportedly bringing out a text, *Interactive Writing*, in the near future on the use of word processing in composition.

Revision: The word processing capability itself is a boon to basic writing students. They need to become especially aware of the need to revise their work, since many basic writing students associate writing with pain that is best ended quickly. Several revision packages are available, some of them quite elaborate. The scope of WRITER'S WORKBENCH is beyond the developmental writing student's needs, although if the University acquired this package R900 students would surely be able to make use of some of its aspects. A more modest program designed for personal computers is HOMER, described above. WANDAH, designed by Ruth Von Blum and Michael Cohen for the IBM PC is not yet on the market, but it appears to be an impressive, comprehensive package that addresses students' needs throughout the writing process.

Grammar Review Courseware: Most of this software tends to be of the Drill and Practice or Tutorial variety, and there is very little quality material on the market. This type of courseware, if it is of high quality and if it branches to allow for individual students' needs, could be useful if made available to students in a software library. Instructors of writing courses or Writing Lab instructors could assign particular items to meet each student's writing problems. This would relieve instructors who are faced with excessive hours of tutoring. These programs could eliminate the need to spend R900 class time on a review of grammatical points that only some students do not understand.

3. There are several problems found in much of the courseware currently available for basic writing:

A. Too much information presented on the screen, which resembles a page in a text.
B. Too little interaction demanded of students.
C. Empty graphics, conveying nothing of substance.
D. Nonforgiving programs, in which it is unclear whether the student has made a substantive error or merely a typing error.
E. No branching to allow for individual students' needs.

4. The computer can be a powerful and flexible aid to basic writing instruction, and there are doubtless exciting uses that we have yet to discover. Thoughtful instructors must also be aware of the limitations of the computer. This educational aid can never substitute for the dialogue between instructor and student about the writing process and good writing strategies. Basic writing students continue to need individual, personalized attention to their writing problems; indeed, the lack of such attention in high school is at the root of writing problems in many cases. Ideally, the computer and the experienced instructor work together to motivate and encourage students to develop confidence in their writing.

5. There are still unknowns about the use of computers in basic writing instruction, and these questions suggest interesting areas of

research. We know that the computer helps to motivate student writers, but we need to know whether it actually improves the *quality* of their work. We need to determine whether using the computer leads to lasting improvements in student writing, as shown in college papers and proficiency examinations.

6. Writing instructors who wish to take advantage of the computer's benefits must be flexible and willing to learn along with their students. As Helen Schwartz advised instructors at the Delaware Valley Writing Council Conference this spring, we must change our concept of "mastery" in teaching so that we may better adapt to what is new. We must change our motto from "ripeness is all" to "readiness is all."

Suggested Uses of Computers in R900

1. The heart of the R900 program is the tutoring of each freshman during a scheduled weekly writing conference with the instructor. This could be an excellent opportunity to use the computer as an aid to instruction rather than as a substitute for the teacher. Ideally, each student and instructor would have access to a Macintosh during their weekly conference. The student could bring a disk with a draft for a current paper project and together they could discuss possibilities for its development and revision. We need to make most efficient use of the Macintosh units in the department so that this sort of computer-enriched conference can occur as often as possible. This means working closely with full-time and adjunct R900 faculty to coordinate scheduling of R900 office hours to make maximum use of the Macintosh units in offices, without conflicting with one another's conference hours. We could limit the number of R900 adjunct faculty assigned to each office in order to prevent overlapping conferences. There will be some scheduling conflicts, given the large number of R900 sections taught in the Fall quarter, but the spillover might be given access to the small Macintosh cluster in the department.

2. Instructors might also consider using the small cluster of computers in the department for students' timed supervised essays, since these essays are scheduled on an individual basis and an instructor would need only one or two machines at a time.

3. We should consider setting up a software library that students in R900, regular freshman composition, or the Tutorial Writing Lab could use for their individual needs in grammar and mechanics review. Invention and revision courseware like WANDAH could also be available there.

4. The possibility of networking computers in a lab so that students could use peer consulting in the writing process is an interesting one to explore. Helen Schwartz does this with literature classes using SEEN, and William Wresch has commented on the usefulness of this method in "Computers and Composition Instruction: An Update," *College English*, 45, No. 8 (December 1983).

5. In the weekly R900 class meetings, instructors should address the topic of using the Macintosh to write R900 essays and other writing assignments at Drexel. Students and instructors should share ideas about how best to use their computers. We must not overlook the benefits of listening to students' ideas and experiences with their computers.

6. R900 staff meetings should provide a forum for faculty to exchange ideas, problems, and suggestions for integrating Macintosh use with the R900 course material. In particular, this would be an excellent opportunity to discuss ideas for new strategies and courseware.

7. During this first year of our use of the Macintosh with R900, it is essential that faculty and students communicate regularly about problems and successes. Some formal evaluation, by students and faculty, of the use of the Macintosh in R900 would be very helpful in making future plans and designing courseware.

8. A sample R900 syllabus (See Attachment B) and course description (See Attachment C) incorporating use of the Macintosh is attached. This would be suitable for distribution to students.

9. A revision of the course description currently given to new R900 faculty is attached (See Attachment A). It refers to the advantages of using computers in the course.

Attachment A

Developmental Writing at Drexel University:
Staffing and Teaching R900

Introduction

From its inception in 1974, the purpose of R900, a developmental writing program, has been to satisfy the needs of students who come to Drexel unable to write on the college level. Students who have not received adequate writing instruction in high school often lack the language skills required of our freshman, despite our high entrance requirements. R900 is designed to help these students succeed.

Overview

The primary goal of R900 is to teach a student to write a coherent 350 word thesis and support essay. Our reason for concentrating on this format is that most college writing is a variation of this basic mode. Students who can write a 350 word essay can write mid-term and final examinations, short papers, and reports. In short, they will be able to write at the college level.

R900 is a three credit "pass-fail" course that is designed to deal with each student's writing problems. Students are required to meet the following minimum requirements:

1. At least one 350 word essay every week

2. Regular attendance in the class for which the student has been registered

3. Regular attendance at a weekly private conference with the student's instructor

R900 sections meet one hour a week in a formal classroom situation. The remaining time is divided between supervised writing and individual conferences. The basic premise of R900 is that students learn to write by writing, and that no amount of grammar drill will teach them to construct well organized coherent essays. For this reason, students are asked to write at least one essay a week and are encouraged to rewrite this essay unitl it passes. Each week a list of suggested topics is handed out in class and students are free to choose one to write about. All completed essays are brought to conference and discussed in detail.

Student Selection

Students are selected for R900 by test and by teacher recommendation. At Drexel, all incoming freshman are given the "English Expression" section of the Cooperative English Examination distributed by the Educational Testing Service at Princeton, New Jersey. This test is administered at Freshman Orientation in late June or early July. Students who fall below a pre-determined level are placed in R900. In addition to this method of selection, each instructor of freshman English is asked to take a writing sample during the first week of class. Students who perform poorly are consulted and advised to drop their composition courses and enroll in R900. Because no method of selection is infallible, all R900 instructors ask their classes early in the semester to write a sample essay. If this essay is judged passing the student is called in by the instructor and given the choice of continuing in R900 or returning to a standard freshman composition class.

Instructors

R900 instructors are professionals with a commitment to developmental writing on the college level. Members of the R900 Staff meet regularly to discuss their common goals and methods. Some sessions consist of one hour instructional seminars where each instructor develops his/her individual interests, and enlightens the rest of the group concerning his/her approach to writing problems. Occasionally guest speakers are

invited to lecture on specialized topics such as Black dialect or Oriental speech patterns.

Class Sessions

In class sessions, topics that are of interest to all R900 students are discussed. Two to three classes are spent examining principles of organizations. Next, the paragraphs of an essay are examined in detail. Students are taught to recognize effective introductions, conclusions, and body paragraphs. Finally, the sentences and words of an essay are discussed. At this point, word choice, sentence structure, and sentence variety are emphasized. Throughout the quarter, individual students' essays are duplicated and analyzed by the class. Whenever possible, final examinations, mid-terms and short paper topics are presented. Students are shown how the methods they are learning can be used for almost all their college writing.

R900 is not simply an accelerated course in fundamentals of English. It is primarily a course designed to prepare students for their college writing experience. Its methods have been formulated with the requirement of college writing in mind. In effect, one function of R900 is to give students the ability and confidence to survive in the university. By stressing the thesis and support format, R900 provides students with a context that can easily accomodate their ideas and enable them to write clear test answers and coherent papers. A crash course in English or secondary school fundamentals cannot accomplish the same ends.

Individual Meetings

Tutorial sessions are held on a one-to-one basis, although occasionally instructors meet students in small groups. At the beginning of each quarter, each student chooses a fifteen-minute conference appointment and is obligated to attend it regularly. One of the primary advantages of these conferences is that they enable an instructor to focus on a student's individual writing problem. Concepts discussed during class sessions can be reinforced, or specific grammatical problems can be diagnosed and corrected. Judging by student comments, the tutorials seem to be the most

interesting and effective feature of R900. Conferences are usually held in a relaxed atmosphere where students are encouraged to freely discuss and evaluate their papers. For many students this is their first opportunity to work closely with an instructor. The experiences they have in R900 conferences do much to "humanize" their college experience.

Grading

In R900 no letter grades are used. Papers are simply designated "pass" or "no pass." Due to the nature of developmental instruction, letter grades are counterproductive. They denote a finality that contradicts the concept that writing is an on-going process. In R900 a "no pass" paper can be rewritten until both teacher and student agree it is a "pass." In order to receive credit for R900, a student has to write a minimum of four passing papers. Standards are high. A paper is considered passing only if it is well organized, coherent, and reasonably free of grammatical errors. Two of the four passing papers have to be done in a supervised writing situation. This requirement not only gives the student confidence, but also duplicates "test" conditions.

Student Evaluations

When asked to evaluate the course most students indicate that R900 gives them something high school does not, and thus makes them feel more confident about college. Some students feel that class meetings are boring, but this attitude is balanced by students who suggest that, in addition to the tutorials, there should be more class meetings. On the whole, student reaction to R900 has been favorable. Most feel the tutoring sessions are the most useful component of the course. Many say that the helpful nature of their instructor is an important factor in determining their attitudes toward R900 and college. Almost all the students say that they like the personal contact the course offers.

Microcomputers in R900

Beginning in 1984 a special component of R900 is the use of microcomputers as an aid to student writers. Each student owns a personal computer and is expected to write and revise "at Home" papers on it. During individual writing conferences, students and instructors may use a microcomputer to work together on a paper plan or revision, providing a microcomputer is available to them at those times. During class sessions, the advanatages of using a microcomputer throughout the writing process are addressed.

Attachment B

R900 Sample Syllabus

Class meets one hour weekly.
Readings are in Kirszner and Mandell, *Basic College Writing*, 2nd ed.
New essay topics will be distributed weekly.

Week 1: Introduction to course.
Student writing sample to check on course placement.

Week 2: Chapter 1, p. 3. The Whole Essay.
Topics: Introduction to the 5 paragraph thesis and support essay.
General advantages of word processing for student writers.
Acceptable formats for papers, using MacWrite.

Week 3: Chapter 2, p. 24. From Topic to Controlling Idea.
Topics: The controlling idea and the pre-writing process.
Pre-writing strategies using MacWrite.
Class pre-writing exercises.
Class discussion of student essays.

Week 4: Chapter 3, p. 40. Structuring Your Essay.
Topics: The sections of a 5 paragraph essay and their functions.
Using MacWrite to note main points of an essay.
Class exercises.
Class discussion of student essays.

Week 5: Chapter 4, p. 65. Revising Your Essay.
Topics: The purpose of revision in the writing process.
Revision strategies using MacWrite.
Class exercises in revision.
Class discussion of student essays.

Week 6: Chapter 5, p. 73. The Introductory Paragraph.
Topic: Alternative approaches to writing
introductory paragraphs and the best use of each.
Class exercises in writing introductions.
Class discussion of student essays.

Week 7: Chapter 6, p. 96. The Body Paragraphs.
Topic: Strategies for developing the body of an essay.
Class exercises.
Class discussion of student essays.

Week 8: Chapter 7, p. 122. The Concluding Paragraph.
Chapter 8, p. 138. Revising Your Paragaphs.
Topics: Alternative approaches to writing
concluding paragraphs and the best use of each.
Revision strategies using MacWrite.
Class exercises.
Class discussion of student essays.

Week 9: Chapter 9, p. 145. Sentence Patterns.
Chapter 11, p. 173. Incorrect Sentence Patterns.
Class exercises in sentence construction and revision.
Class discussion of student essays.

Week 10: Chapter 10, p. 160. Sentence Style.
Topic: The concept of "style".
Class exercises using revision strategies for clarity and
effectiveness.
Class discussion of student essays.

Attachment C

R900 Course Description

TEXTS: Kirszner, Laurie G. and Stephen R. Mandell, *Basic College Writing*, 2nd edition.
Little Brown Handbook
A good college dictionary

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The purpose of R900, a developmental writing course, is to satisfy the needs of students who come to Drexel unable to write on the college level. Students who have not received adequate writing instruction in high school often lack the language skills required of our freshmen at Drexel. R900 is designed to help these students succeed in all their college writing assignments.

R900 teaches a student to write a coherent 350 word thesis and support essay; most college writing, including examinations, short papers and reports, is a variation of this basic structure. In this three credit "pass-fail" course, students must write at least four passing essays (two at home and two under supervision). A paper is considered passing only if it is well organized, coherent, and reasonably free of grammatical errors. Classes meet once weekly to discuss writing strategies. The student has the benefit of individual attention to his/her particular writing problems during scheduled weekly conferences with the instructor.

Beginning in 1984 a special component of R900 is the use of microcompters as an aid to student writers. Each student owns a personal computer and is expected to write and revise "at home" papers on it. During individual writing conferences, student and instructor may use a microcomputer to work together on a paper plan or revision, providing a microcomputer is available to them at that time. During class sessions, the instructor and students discuss the advantages of using a microcomputer throughout the writing process.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. In order to receive credit for R900, a student has to write a minimum of four passing papers. Two of these four must be done in a supervised writing situation and two are to be written at home. A list of topics will be distributed in class weekly. Students should write or revise at least one 350 word essay each week.

2. Students must attend class regularly. Classes meet as a group one hour weekly.

3. Students must attend individual conferences each week at the assigned times. It is very important to notify the instructor if a conference appointment cannot be kept.